



Testimony of AARP Connecticut on
S.B. 271, AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID REFORM TO PROMOTE AGING IN
PLACE
Human Services Committee
March 17, 2015

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee,

AARP is pleased to offer our support for the pilot program outlined in S.B. 271, *An Act Concerning Medicaid Reform to Promote Aging in Place*, and we hope that it will inform broader system changes for living independently.

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with an age 50+ membership of nearly 37 million nationwide, and approximately 600,000 here in Connecticut. AARP fights for issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, family caregiving and independent living.

S.B. 271 would establish a 50-person pilot program within the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders to expedite Medicaid eligibility determinations and provide home and community based services as an alternative to nursing home care. The proposal outlines a financially prudent, data-driven approach. Even though the proposal is restricted in both scope (50 individuals) and duration (one-year), it will provide important data to evaluate presumptive eligibility decisions, error rates and screening tools that can be used to take the policy to scale in the future.

In 2014, AARP in partnership with The Scan Foundation and The Commonwealth Fund released a multidimensional Scorecard to measure state-level performance of long-term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities. While Connecticut ranked in the top quartile overall, we received only mediocre scores in consumer choice—ranking 22.

AARP believes that presumptive eligibility is an important tool to expand our capacity for prompt financial and functional Medicaid eligibility determinations and timely access to home care services. Timely eligibility determinations are a common characteristic among states that lead the way in consumer choice.

When decisions must be made quickly, at a time of crisis, public assistance programs must be able to arrange for HCBS on short-notice. Delayed access to home and community supports can often results in unnecessary nursing home placement.

S.B.271 would help ensure prompt coordination of home and community based services under the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. AARP supports the proposal and welcomes the opportunity to work with Members of the Human Services Committee to strengthen consumer options for aging in place.

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